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ABSTRACT

An evaluation was done of New York City Board of Education's Project, Parent Resources and Education Program (Project PREP) for 1989-90. In its first year of funding, the project served parents of students of limited English proficiency at South Bronx High School by aiming to increase parents' literacy and awareness of sources of assistance and to enable them to promote their children's academic success. The 12 participants were mothers who lacked literacy skills in their native languages and who had low incomes and little contact with English speakers. Through a participant survey, the evaluation found that participants were positive about their progress in language facility. The evaluation found that the project was only partially implemented as a result of low enrollment and attendance. Although the project met its goals for teaching English as a second language, developing an informational brochure, and developing curriculum, it did not meet its goals for parental involvement. In addition, it was impossible to evaluate the objective for staff development because of insufficient data and the very low number of participants. (JB)

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OREA Report

PARENT RESOURCES AND EDUCATION PROGRAM
(PROJECT PREP)
Grant Number: T003J90012

1989-90

FINAL EVALUATION REPORT

U0 024 563

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8/90

PARENT RESOURCES AND EDUCATION PROGRAM
(PROJECT PREP)
1989-90

SUMMARY

- Project PREP was only partially implemented as a result of low parental enrollment and attendance. It provided English as a Second Language (E.S.L.) for parents, developed an informational brochure, and developed curricula.

- The project met its objectives for E.S.L., developing an informative brochure, and developing curriculum. It did not meet its objectives for parental involvement. It was impossible to evaluate the objective for staff development because of insufficient data. Since the number of parents who participated was so small, it was impossible to collect meaningful data to assess objectives for student academic performance or attendance rate.

The Parent Resources and Education Program (Project PREP) was an Elementary and Secondary Education Act (E.S.E.A.) Title VII-funded program in its first year. The project served parents of students of limited English proficiency (LEP) at South Bronx High School. The program, the only one of its kind in New York, aimed to increase parents' literacy and awareness of sources of assistance and to enable them to promote their children's academic success. When too few parents registered for the program, staff opened enrollment to parents and siblings of all Hispanic students at the school. Scheduling of the E.S.L. courses was apparently a problem. Changing the schedule increased enrollment.

The conclusions, based on the findings of this evaluation, lead to the following recommendations:

- Arrange for a more coherent staffing pattern to cut down on paperwork and allow for better carryover and planning.

- Publicize the program in local media outlets, bulletin boards, and in the school.

- Continue to make program and scheduling adjustments as needed.

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This report has been prepared by the Bilingual, Multicultural, and Early Childhood Evaluation Unit of the Office of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment. Thanks are due to Carlos Bordé for collecting the data and writing the report.

Additional copies of this report are available from:

Dr. Tomi Deutsch Berney
Office of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment
New York City Public Schools
110 Livingston Street, Room 732
Brooklyn, NY 11201
(718) 935-3790

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I. INTRODUCTION

This report documents the Office of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment's (OREA's) evaluation of Parent Resources and Education Program (Project PREP), an Elementary and Secondary Education Act (E.S.E.A.) Title VII program. The project was in its first year of a three-year funding cycle. Project PREP aimed to improve parents' English literacy in order to foster the educational achievements of their limited English proficient (LEP) children and to make parents aware of opportunities available to them in the community.

The program had originally proposed to serve 40 parents of LEP students at South Bronx High School. Poor enrollment and attendance led to limited program implementation. The program opened enrollment to the parents and siblings of non-LEP students.

PARTICIPANTS

Program participants were mothers of students in the bilingual program. Sixteen mothers had enrolled in the program, but at least four had to drop out because of jobs that conflicted with the scheduled English as a Second Language (E.S.L.) class. All participants lacked literacy skills in their native language and had low incomes and little contact with English speakers.

STAFF

The staff was comprised of a project director, an E.S.L. teacher, three part-time educational assistants, and a secretary. The project director held a master's degree as well as a

professional diploma in administration and supervision. The educational assistants worked between two and four hours a week. The secretarial position was filled by two part-time workers. This erratic staffing increased paperwork for timekeeping and payment of salaries and did not permit carryover of activities.

II. IMPLEMENTATION AND OUTCOMES

INSTRUCTIONAL

English as a Second Language

- As a result of participating in the E.S.L. course, 75 percent of the participating parents will make statistically significant gains in English language proficiency.

Five participants completed an E.S.L. pre- and posttest. Although this small number of participants precluded statistical analysis, scores indicated that all participants showed gains. Project PREP met its objective for E.S.L.

Scheduling of the E.S.L. courses was apparently a problem. When the scheduled time was changed from 2:30 to 3:30 in the afternoon, enrollment increased from six to sixteen parents. Because of this, the project director anticipated giving an E.S.L. course at 6:00 in the evening. A more extended pre-high school equivalency (pre-G.E.D.) course was also being planned.

Nine participants evaluated the E.S.L. course. The responses were very positive and indicated that the participants felt that they had learned a significant amount of English. On a Likert-type scale from one to six (one being the lowest) they gave the amount of English they knew before the course a mean

score of 2.2 (s.d.=1.1) and the amount of English they knew after the course a mean score of 4.0 (s.d.=1.7). The mean gain of 1.8 (s.d.=1.5) was statistically significant ($p<.05$).

Student Academic Performance

- Academic performance of the LEP children of Project PREP participants will show improvement.

The number of parents served was too small to collect meaningful data on student academic performance.

NONINSTRUCTIONAL

Student Attendance Rate

- The LEP children of Project PREP participants will show an increase in their attendance rate.

The number of participating parents was too small for data on their children's attendance to be meaningful. OREA was unable to evaluate the objective for student attendance rate.

Staff Development

- All staff members will be fully trained in the goals of the program and educational aspects related to E.S.L. and parental involvement through training workshops conducted before the program begins.

OREA was unable to evaluate the objective for staff development because of insufficient data.

Development of Informational Brochure

- A brochure will be developed to explain the E.S.L. course and the parental involvement workshops.

Project PREP developed a brochure and the project director distributed this brochures to students to inform parents of the workshops and free E.S.L. classes. Project PREP met its objective for the development of an informational brochure.

Curriculum Development

- Curriculum/course outlines will be developed for the E.S.L. course and parent involvement workshops.

Project staff designed a curriculum for beginning level adult learners of E.S.L. The project met its objective for curriculum development.

Parental Involvement

- As a result of participating in a two-hour parental involvement workshop twice a week for two seventeen-week semesters, a minimum of twenty parents will have experienced gains in knowledge and understanding of the functioning of South Bronx High School and their involvement in their child's education and will have a better understanding of the techniques used to stimulate increased parental involvement.

- Seventy-five percent of the program participants will develop a more positive self-image and increased self-esteem.

The project was unable to implement any of the proposed activities for parental involvement and failed to meet its objectives.

III. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The basic goal of the program was to improve the educational achievements of LEP students by improving the English competence of those students' parents. Project PREP provided E.S.L. for parents, developed an informational brochure, and developed curricula. Reaching the parents proved to be a problem for the project. In an effort to improve participation, project staff adjusted the schedule of activities and offered courses likely to be of greater interest to target parents. Because of

the low enrollment, the project did not meet its objectives for parental involvement. Since the number of parents who participated was so small, it was impossible to collect meaningful data to assess objectives for student academic performance or attendance rate. OREA was also unable to evaluate the objective for staff development because of insufficient data.

The conclusions, based on the findings of this evaluation, lead to the following recommendations:

- Arrange for a more coherent staffing pattern to cut down on paperwork and allow for better carryover and planning.
- Publicize the program in local media outlets, bulletin boards, and in the school.
- Continue to make program and scheduling adjustments as needed.